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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 00097

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000097

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NEA/PPD; NEA/ARP; NEA/EX:CKEITH; ECA/P:PIVES

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [TC](#) [SCUL](#)
SUBJECT: UAE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MICROSCHOLARSHIPS

11. (U) Summary: The inauguration of the English-language Microscholarship Program in the UAE has generated goodwill and a positive image for the US at a time when Emirati students are bombarded with negative images from press and television. This is the first program to reach out to UAE youth in traditionally under-served areas in the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Ajman. One hundred grade 11 UAE students (50 boys and 50 girls) were awarded microscholarships to take 200 hours of American English after their regular school hours. The parents and government school students have been highly appreciative of the chance to participate in a special course with native English language teachers, especially since they have few opportunities to interact in English. Post urges continuation and expansion of this program. End Summary.

12. (U) Action Request: Post requests \$150,000 per year for the continuation of this program in FY2005 and FY2006.

UAE Microscholarship Program: Innovative and effective engagement with Emirati youth

13. (U) The program consists of language instruction provided by English Language Services (ELS), and supplemented by guest speakers and field trips to the embassy. The program is offered at four (4) government-operated schools, with the full cooperation of the UAE Ministry of Education. The program has generated an overwhelmingly positive response from administrators, teachers, students and parents. This is the first time the US Government has offered scholarships to young UAE nationals ages 16-18. The participants are less advantaged students who have little access to English language training. Media coverage generated articles in both English "Gulf News" and Arabic "Al-Khaleej."

14. (U) Ministry of Education officials have told post that they will make a presentation on the program at the March conference of TESOL Arabia, the English teaching professional association, to give an overview of the benefits of the microscholarship program. Abu Dhabi Education Zone officials told post that they would submit a special portfolio on the Microscholarship Program to compete for an annual distinguished educational program award.

15. (U) The English instruction for the special scholarship program is provided by ELS Language Centers. The teachers are all native speakers who employ current communicative language teaching methodologies, which incorporate games and activities to offer students a motivating alternative to more traditional approaches. The textbook used is "About the USA," one of the Department of State English Language publications that post provided to ELS for this program.

Abu Dhabi: Ambassador visits boys' and girls' schools

16. (U) On October 16 Ambassador presented Microscholarship award certificates to students from the Abdul-Kader Al-Jazaeri Secondary School for Boys in Al-Mafraq and the Al-Mafraq Secondary School for Girls in Al-Shahama, two secondary schools located in outlying areas of the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

17. (U) Comments from students: One girl told the Ambassador, "We feel important that the US government cares for us." One of the boys told the Ambassador, "My friends are asking if there are more opportunities in the future to get similar microscholarships because they were not selected."

18. (U) As part of the Microscholarship guest speaker program, APAO gave a presentation at the boys' school to discuss US holidays and similarities with local holidays.

Abu Dhabi: Students take field trip to embassy

19. (U) On November 29-30 the Public Affairs Section invited the Abu Dhabi emirate scholarship students to the embassy for sessions on the history of U.S. immigration, tour of the embassy and lunch. Four officers from the embassy assisted in facilitating the discussion. The background of the officers provided the boys and girls with examples of the diverse nature of America. The group consisted of junior and mid-level officers, including a young single female, a woman married to a Sudanese Muslim, a military officer, and a first generation Muslim-American born in Kabul. The students toured the embassy to learn about the building's cutting-edge environmental features and had lunch in the cafeteria. A few days after the event post received a package of thank you cards and posters from each of the schools.

Ajman: Boys' school is an Islamic institute

110. (U) On December 7 PAO and NEA/PD Desk Officer presented Certificates of Award of Microscholarships for English Language study to twenty-five UAE girls at the Sawdh Bint Zamaa girls school and twenty-five UAE boys at the Scientific Islamic Institute, both in the Emirate of Ajman. Families of the students and officials from the Ajman Educational Zone were present as well. The partnership with the Scientific Islamic Institute is noteworthy as it is the first USG funded program of this type operating in the UAE at an Islamic educational institute for boys.

111. (U) Comments from Ajman: The Islamic Scientific Institute Principal gave a warm welcome speech at the opening of the ceremony. In his remarks to the students, selected from five Ajman schools, he emphasized that learning English will allow the UAE people to better

understand US society and culture, and enable them to educate Americans about Islam and Arab culture.

¶12. (U) BPAO Dubai will visit both schools as guest teacher and try to arrange a visit to the consulate for the students. BPAO is arranging for UAE teachers that are part of the Ajman Microscholarship Program to attend an upcoming teacher-training workshop in the UAE conducted by the RELO.

¶13. (U) Post welcomes the opportunity for participating in subject program during the 2005/2006 academic year and would like to expand the program to include more students from other emirates.

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